

perdu pour moi/ Contrast the 'four happiest
 days' in the
 life of one of the most charming figures in a
 less thought-
 sicklied age, the eighteenth-century Prince
 de Ligne—
 'celui ou j'ai mis pour la premiere fois mon
 uniforme, le
 soir de la premiere bataille ou je me suis
 trouve, le jour
 ou Ton m'a dit pour la premiere fois qu'on
 m'aimait, et
 celui ou je suis sorri apres ma petite verole*.
 Can we really
 doubt which of these two lives Montaigne
 would have
 found saner and more human? Can we
 doubt that he
 would have been right? Had he lived more
 fully Fkubert
 would have written less; would he have
 written worse?

The Goncourts thought so. They held
 that artists
 ought to be ill, that great works are only
 written by
 neurotics. They have left a fascinating
 picture, it is true,
 of Flaubert in his gayer moments; when the
 weary giant,
 escaped from the treadmill where he slaved
 blindly for
 the unappreciative Philistines, would make
 their room
 rock with Viking laughter or Berserk
 tirades. But
 through their *Journal* the sense of
 melancholia, of nerves
 backed to breaking-point, incessantly
 returns. They re-
 cord how Zola has hallucinations of mice and
 sparrows;
 Flaubert, of somebody standing behind him.
 'C'est posi-
 tif, nous sommes ores malades, quasi fous, et
 tout prepares
 a le devenir complement.' 'Notre talent!
 qui sake c'est
 peut-etre Talliance d'une maladie de coeur
 et d'une

maladie de foie.' Surely the critics are themselves diseased who thus demand that authors should be. But this view is far from having died with the Goncourts. It is, indeed, more often felt than stated today. But it has found its most superb expression in the remark, which so amused Proust, of Prince Edmond de Polignac: 'Un teб 11 ne peut pas etre intelligent, il n'est pas malade.* And yet though Flaubert has been here discussed, in part, as an example of the fatality of trying in the modern